

successful rival of Athens, Byzantium gained new glory by withstanding for two years the assaults of Philip of Macedon. Thanks to the eloquence of Demosthenes, Athens sent help in the shape of ships and men, and, in commemoration of a night attack of the Macedonians successfully foiled by the opportune rising of the moon, Byzantium placed upon her coins the crescent and the star, which for four centuries and a half have been the familiar symbols of Turkish sovereignty. Byzantium grew rich on commerce. It was the port of call at which every ship entering or leaving the Bosphorus was bound to touch; no craft sailed the Euxine without paying dues to the city at its mouth. Polybius, in a very interesting passage,* points out how Byzantium occupied "the most secure and advantageous position of any city in our quarter of the world, as far as the sea is concerned." Then he continues:

"The Pontus, therefore, being rich in what the rest of the world requires to support life, the Byzantines are absolute masters in this respect. For the first necessities of existence, cattle and slaves, are admittedly supplied by the region of the Pontus in better quality and greater profusion than elsewhere. In the matter of luxuries, they supply us with honey, wax, and salt fish, while they take our superfluous olive oil and wines."

It was Byzantium, therefore, which kept open the straits, and Polybius speaks of the city as a common benefactor of the Greeks. When the Romans began to appear on the scene as a world-power, Byzantium

*Bk. IV., c. 38, *sty.*